

Press Release

Save Seawolves Athletics Files Civil Rights Complaint Over Sonoma State University's Athletic Cuts

Rohnert Park, CA – *January 25, 2025* – Save Seawolves Athletics, the grassroots organization dedicated to preserving the Sonoma State University (SSU) Athletics Program and demanding transparency in university decision-making, has filed a formal Civil Rights Complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

The complaint calls for an investigation into the disproportionate impact of the university's recent decision to cut athletic programs, highlighting how these cuts affect student-athletes, particularly those from minority backgrounds.

The Save Seawolves Athletics group argues that SSU's decision, led by the Office of the President, has unfairly targeted a student body that is notably diverse, creating a disparate impact on students from underrepresented communities.

Among the specific cases presented in the complaint is that of a local Hispanic student-athlete, who is set to enter his senior year. This student faces a unique challenge: with only one semester remaining to complete his academic requirements, he now finds his ability to compete in his final year of collegiate athletics in jeopardy. This is just one example of many, where student-athletes are left with few options, as they lack the resources or support to transfer or continue their education elsewhere.

The group contends that these students have not been provided with due process, and their individual challenges have not been given proper consideration in the university's decision-making process. Save Seawolves Athletics maintains that these actions disproportionately affect minority students and must be thoroughly investigated.

"We believe that the decision to eliminate athletics must be reversed, and that alternatives should be explored within the broader university budget that do not negatively impact marginalized students to such an extent," said a spokesperson for Save Seawolves Athletics. "The lack of transparency in the process—particularly the failure to involve key stakeholders like the Athletics Department and the Student Athlete Council—further underscores the need for an independent investigation."

In addition, Save Seawolves Athletics believes the university may have overlooked a critical opportunity to generate revenue through athletics. Given the success and passion of the SSU athletic programs, the group argues that athletics not only provides significant value to the students and community but also has the potential to serve as a profitable venture for the university. The group is concerned that this potential revenue has not been fully explored or taken into account in the decision-making process.

The complaint also highlights concerns over violations of civil rights protections for both students and faculty, alleging a disregard for the fairness and inclusion guaranteed under federal law. Save Seawolves Athletics asserts that the university must be held accountable for its lack of communication, transparency, and due process.

Save Seawolves Athletics is calling on the university to reinstate the athletics programs and to work with the broader SSU community—including students, staff, and faculty—toward finding more equitable solutions that do not disproportionately affect students of color or undermine their educational and athletic opportunities.

For more information or to support Save Seawolves Athletics in their mission to preserve SSU's athletic programs, please visit

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